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New York

President: Mr. Essy . . . . . (Côte d'Ivoire)

The meeting was called to order at 10.35 a.m.

Address by Mr. José María Figueres Olsen, Constitutional President of the Republic of Costa Rica

The President *(interpretation from French)*: The Assembly will first hear an address by the Constitutional President of the Republic of Costa Rica.

Mr. José María Figueres Olsen, Constitutional President of the Republic of Costa Rica, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The President *(interpretation from French)*: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations the Constitutional President of the Republic of Costa Rica, His Excellency Mr. José María Figueres Olsen, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Figueres Olsen *(interpretation from Spanish)*: Costa Rica hails and congratulates you most warmly, Sir, on your election to the presidency of the General Assembly. We also wish to thank the Secretary-General, whose untiring efforts have made this an Organization which is daily playing a more dynamic and effective role in the advancement of peace, security and development.

We are Members of an Organization whose name bespeaks hope and dreams - the United Nations; not aligned or groups of nations but one single family of peoples, united in the struggle for peace, human rights and development.

In those dark days of 1945, filled with suffering, hatred and ruin, those who forged the United Nations created an Organization with medium- and long-term objectives. Rather than setting up a transitory league of victors, their vision was to look to the future in unity. They thought not only of themselves; they thought as well of their children and their grandchildren. They also thought of the children of their former adversaries, and thought as well of those who had stayed on the margins of the tragedy.

My country is proud to have been a founding member of this fraternity. It is also proud to say that the ideals of the United Nations live on in the spirit and in the daily lives of our people. And although my country is not wealthy, not powerful, not big, we feel we have honourably served the cause of this Organization both within and beyond our borders.

Despite the limitations inherent in our small and poor country, the Costa Rican people have proved they are capable of dreaming bold dreams and of making those dreams come true. Forty-six years ago, when the United Nations was about to take its first steps and the world was just beginning to emerge from the horrors of the Second World War, a group of men and women of vision in our country began to pursue the dream of a world

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without wars and armies, and decided that the dream should begin to be made a reality right at home. We thus abolished our army and began a long period of economic growth, accompanied by social well-being and political stability. We became a model of human development in a developing country and a force for the abolition of war and violence in our region. It is through our commitment to making this dream a reality within our own borders that our country has made its most important contribution to the cause of the United Nations.

Today, as humanity stands at a decisive crossroads, the need to build new utopias has become of the utmost urgency. As human beings, we are at our creative best only when we are in pursuit of a dream, when our eyes shine with the gleam of that dream. Given the magnitude of the dangers we face, the international community, now perhaps more than ever before, needs to muster all its energies in pursuit of renewal.

As a people living at the centre of the Americas, we are deeply concerned by the threats hanging over mankind. We are especially concerned about growing tensions between the proponents of social progress and those of the natural environment that supports it. At times, the countries of the world seem to be playing out a macabre global compact for self-destruction. While the production and consumption patterns of the industrialized world are wreaking havoc on nature, poverty in the third world is also causing serious environmental damage. The end result is a rapid deterioration of the natural resource base upon which all of life and society depends, to the point where the very survival of humanity is in jeopardy. With every passing day, awareness is growing of the fact that this absurd path the world has chosen to follow is not sustainable.

Given such a formidable threat, the United Nations once again shines like a beacon of hope for the world. As a forum pooling the energies of the international community, it has already acted resolutely in dealing with the environment. From a variety of vantage points, many of its agencies have launched efforts to preserve and conserve the world's resources and to establish norms of social organization that are compatible with the life cycles of the planet. At the Rio de Janeiro Summit, that decades-long effort of the United Nations in this area was clearly expressed, and the adoption of Agenda 21, along with the conventions on biodiversity and climatic change, which my country has signed, is to a large extent the fruit of the work of the United Nations.

As the community of nations tackles new common challenges, Costa Rica once again affirms its commitment to play a useful role. Aware as we are of our limitations as a small and poor country, we can but offer the best we have. We pledge our land and our collective determination as a contribution to building utopias and keeping hope alive.

We wish to assume our role in these global causes with two reasons in mind: we are committed to the world-wide struggle to ensure the existence and well-being of mankind, and we feel it is urgent for us to provide our people with the kind of development that will make of nature an ally and not an enemy.

Today, we acknowledge that the social and economic progress made in Costa Rica in recent decades was achieved at the expense of a serious deterioration in our environment. Our polluted rivers, our eroded soil and our rapidly disappearing forests are the unfortunate proof. For the future, only sustainable development can offer us continued abundance and growing well-being, generation after generation.

All too often throughout history, human beings have opted for the easy way out - only economic growth, superficial and fleeting change and an irrational exploitation of the environment. Aware as we are of the deplorable results of such an approach, we Costa Ricans wish to rid ourselves of such self-deception. We envisage sustainable development as one that is mindful of the macro-equilibrium that in turn makes long-term development possible - I refer to political stability, social equity, economic balance and harmony with nature.

The enjoyment of peace, democracy and stability in Costa Rica is in large measure because of the sustained investment we have made for decades in education, health and other services to ensure the well-being of our people. By abolishing our army, we have been able to convert military expenditure into expenditure on social programmes and to avoid the threat of stunted development such as often occurs under military dictatorships. Building on these traditions, we are now attaining new and ambitious goals.

To achieve sustainability, major changes are in store for us in our way of life, and to make these changes we will have to set free the energies and the determination of our citizens. That is why we are shifting away from representative democracy and moving towards more complex forms of participatory democracy.

Since we have chosen to pursue sustainable development we are committed to finding medium- and long-term solutions to the cyclical economic imbalances from which we have suffered over the years.

Desirous as we are of changing the ways in which we interact with the natural world, we in Costa Rica have undertaken an ambitious programme based on social consensus, the work of the scientific and technological community and the historical ability of new State institutions to promote development. Decades ago, when the topic of environmental conservation was not yet a key item on the agendas of Governments or international organizations, my country was already working to set up a system of nature conservation areas which today cover one fourth of our national territory and provide protection for virtually all our animal and plant species. Today we are taking yet a further step and endeavouring to arrive at an integrated scheme to combine nature conservation with the productive use of tropical biodiversity. Our goal to live in harmony with nature has helped us to realize that our land was for the most part meant to be forested. The objectives of our programme include improving the net absorption of carbon dioxide through forestation programmes carried out in conjunction with developed countries, the exportation of plant trees and the development of technologies for tropical reforestation. These and other projects are part of a national plan designed to implement all the elements of Agenda 21, adopted at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro.

In the pursuit of these and other, similar goals we intend to make Costa Rica into a model of sustainable development. Indeed, we hope to become the first developing country to make the leap to sustainable development. Like other dreams we have cherished and realized in the past, through our own efforts and with the help of the international community, this dream is bold and ambitious.

Costa Rica cherishes this aspiration for all of Central America as well. We are committed to our region's efforts to achieve sustainable development, efforts that are today being carried out under a common programme that was agreed to at our recent meetings of Presidents.

During the tragic years of the Central American crisis Costa Rica did not suffer the ravages of war or dictatorship, nor did it see any of its freedoms taken away. Nevertheless, our national development was hampered by the backwardness, injustice and violence that held sway throughout the region. Today, we Costa Ricans reaffirm our conviction that our destiny as a nation is indissolubly linked to that of the other nations of the Isthmus.

Costa Rica vividly remembers and continues to be grateful to the United Nations for its valuable support in bringing peace to our region. We recall the exceptional efforts the Organization made. Its action of solidarity, mobilizing substantial resources and devising specific programmes, was at that time of great benefit to Central America.

Today, the situation is very different. In our region we have put an end to the fratricidal conflicts that bled us for decades and we have ushered in an era of reconciliation, peace and democracy. Today, Central America offers much more fertile ground for ever-higher levels of human development. Today, our peoples are more capable of building a better future for themselves and therefore of establishing mutually beneficial and cooperative relations with international organizations and friendly countries.

Today's watchword is "interdependence". The industrialized countries will be able to maintain their standards of living and levels of production only if they can foster development in the rest of the world. This is why we invite them to forge closer ties of cooperation with us so that Central America's goals can be shared and more easily attained by our countries.

Notwithstanding innumerable difficulties and despite 40 years of cold war and a multitude of conflicts, the United Nations has a record of accomplishment unprecedented in history.

We derive great satisfaction from the imminent fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations. Never before in the history of mankind has any joint effort for peace managed to endure so long, and never before has any international effort taken on such universal proportions.

We nevertheless hope that this universality will become total as soon as possible, without any exceptions whatever. Today, Costa Rica would like to reaffirm its strong support for the legitimate aspirations of the Republic of China in Taiwan to take part in the efforts of the United Nations. We believe that the people of that nation must be represented in this family of nations. It is a reality, and it is also an issue that the Organization cannot continue to sidestep.

The impending anniversary is also a good time for us to set a new course for the United Nations so that we can successfully meet new challenges. We consider the ideas on this subject contained in the Secretary-General's "Agenda for Peace" to be of the utmost importance, and we hope that we will be able to contribute to making them a reality.

"An Agenda for Peace" is a particularly important guide for the international community. Its natural complement, the agenda for development, optimistically reflects mankind's new concerns and offers us great opportunities to work dynamically in building the new millennium.

Indeed, there is a great deal of work before us. Although there is no longer a cold war, although many States have rejected totalitarianism, it is still true that we are faced with the horror of the unfolding tragedy of Rwanda, the aggression being pursued against Bosnia and the resurgence of ethnic and religious fanaticism. We are frustrated to see that the best efforts of the organized international community have not been sufficient to find a way out of the Cuban crisis, in our America.

We feel indignation in the face of the violence and exploitation to which women and children continue to be subjected and alarm at the steady increase in drug trafficking and its occasional ally, terrorism. We are sad to see that hunger and poverty continue to be a daily reality for millions in Africa, Asia and our own Latin America.

These painful realities must not, however, weaken our resolve. Recently we have seen hopeful and bright signals to the effect that things can and should be different. We have witnessed the Republic of South Africa peacefully putting an end to a shameful regime and becoming the mother of all its children, regardless of the color of their skin.

We have seen Israelis, Palestinians and Jordanians together plough furrows of peace through the Holy Land. The first steps have been taken towards reconciliation in Northern Ireland. There are signs of lessening tensions on the Korean peninsula, and we trust that, through negotiations, there will be effective control of North Korea's nuclear programme.

Just a few days ago we saw how the efforts of the international community had finally provided the people of Haiti with a chance of real peace and democracy. Costa Rica would like to make a proposal that it considers basic for human development in Haiti. To this end we ask the United Nations to work with others on a democratization programme, with the gradual and irreversible abolition of the army in that country. The time is ripe for such an initiative; by carrying it out we would protect this long-suffering nation from many future injustices.

Having for many years been committed to the struggle against poverty and underdevelopment, Costa Rica has strong hopes of the World Summit for Social Development, to be held in Denmark next March. My country shares and supports its objectives and will enthusiastically participate in activities at the Summit and afterwards.

We optimistically hail, as part of the restructuring of international relations, the establishment of the World Trade Organization. We are confident that its creation will lead to greater legal consistency in international trade relations, a new era of global economic cooperation and a greater dynamism in trade, as well as higher volumes. For countries such as the banana-producing countries of Latin America, today facing serious problems because of reduced access to markets in the European Union, this new forum will be of particular importance. We are glad that its priority topics include the links between trade policies, environmental policies and sustainable development.

Costa Rica was present in San Francisco to declare its faith in the future of the world. We have been here for half a century, bearing witness to our trust in the United Nations. Today Costa Rica is present again to call on all Member States to continue to look forward, firmly committed to working with still greater dedication for the attainment of the common goal of securing the well-being of our peoples.

We must have faith in the future, but we must work to build it. Let us forge a new spirit in our minds and fill our hearts, and this Organization, with a new kind of feeling. Let us adopt as our own the attitude embodied in the lessons of an old proverb:

> "Fear less and hope more; complain less and breathe more; speak less and say more; hate less and love more; and all good things shall be yours."

The President *(interpretation from French)*: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Constitutional President of the Republic of Costa Rica for the statement he has just made.

Mr. José María Figueres Olsen, Constitutional President of the Republic of Costa Rica, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Agenda item 9 *(continued)*

General debate

The President *(interpretation from French)*: The first speaker in the resumed debate is the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, His Excellency Mr. Douglas Hurd, on whom I now call.

Mr. Hurd (United Kingdom): I should like first to congratulate you most warmly, Sir, on your election as President. The Assembly could not have made a wiser choice. I wish you all good fortune and success in your mission.

In a few months we shall commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the birth of the United Nations. The United Nations is the fullest expression man has yet achieved of the age-old desire to escape from war and establish an enduring peace.

When the United Nations was founded in San Francisco 50 years ago the threat of nuclear war between the super-Powers had already begun to cast a shadow across the world. That shadow has now lifted, and we all live and sleep more safely as a result. Yet as we approach the anniversary we are all more conscious of the suffering and destruction that still disfigure parts of almost every continent in the world. The threats to international peace and security are more diffuse and perhaps less serious than they were, but not less real and not less tragic for those caught up in them.

To some extent, disappointment comes out of exaggerated expectation. There is still a tendency to think of the United Nations as if it were some great palace of world order which descended splendidly from heaven 50 years ago. If that were our view, then every broken pane of glass in that palace, every door, every pillar fouled or damaged would be a disgrace and a scandal.

But, of course, in reality world order does not descend from heaven at the moment when a Charter is signed. It is not like that at all. World order is built painfully, gradually, brick by brick. Sometimes the wind and the weather destroy what has already been built. But the builders cannot afford to be discouraged - and we are all builders. They have to repair; they have to rebuild; they have to hope that gradually in what they build the advances will outnumber the retreats.

There have been recent advances that have been dramatic - beyond expectation. No one who was present at the Union Buildings in Pretoria this May could fail to be moved at the birth of the new South Africa. The goodwill and the cheerful determination of all South Africans on that occasion were a marvelous refutation, it seemed to me, of the cynicism that so often weakens our work.

And we have seen the same as the peace process gathers strength in the Middle East.

In part of my own country, we may - and I fervently hope we shall - see killings cease, see fears slowly dissolve, as a result of the process started by the British and Irish Governments in the Downing Street Declaration on Northern Ireland.

In Europe - in Cyprus, in the former Yugoslavia, in Georgia -the United Nations has helped at least to contain if not yet to resolve deep-rooted conflicts. The world's most intractable problems continue to be laid at your door, Mr. Secretary-General, like infants laid at the door of some medieval monastery. It is not surprising that, for all the efforts of 77,000 men and women serving in United Nations peace-keeping operations in the field, our Organization has had failures as well as successes to its name.

As is common in our society of mass media, the headlines have been dominated by the reversals, and some of them have indeed been tragic. In Rwanda the efforts of the United Nations failed to avert genocide. In Somalia it looks as if our efforts have been effectively spurned by a people whose need for help seemed, and seems, self-evident.

A word about Bosnia. There has in recent months, mercifully, been more peace in Bosnia. It is a fragile, uncertain, inconclusive, often interrupted peace, but it is still better than what went before. We necessarily discuss Bosnia all the time. The debate in particular in this building about the United Nations arms embargo has at times seemed to rage more fiercely than the fighting on the ground. Certainly the diplomatic efforts have been frustrating. And I can understand those who believe that reverting to a fight, even a fight to the death, would be

preferable to the tangle of negotiations and compromise that sometimes seems to stretch ahead for ever.

Nevertheless, I do not agree with that opinion. We should value, we should build on, the advances that have been made, we should value the lives that have been saved by the reduction in fighting on the ground. We can now see perhaps more clearly that the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) has been essential in protecting civilians and in preventing the Bosnian Serb army from making further advances. Who here can believe that Gorazde, or Srebrenica or Zepa would still be in the hands of the Bosnian Government if it were not for the bravery and commitment of UNPROFOR troops?

UNPROFOR can operate only if it is able to keep lines open to all the parties to the fighting. It could not continue if leading members of the United Nations were rearming one side; UNPROFOR would then be identified as a party to the war. It is not mandated or equipped for that purpose. Our Secretary-General has endorsed that view, and the Commander of United Nations forces in Bosnia has rightly said "We have not come here to fight a war from inside white painted vehicles".

So I welcome the decision of which we heard yesterday from the Bosnian President, the decision to accept that now is not the moment to lift the arms embargo. And that Bosnian decision allows UNPROFOR to continue its mission. We have said before that if the Bosnian Serbs do not join the peace process and agree the map presented by the Contact Group, then our present approach may become exhausted. Lifting the arms embargo may become unavoidable, as we said at Geneva in July, and in those circumstances UNPROFOR would have to withdraw. But it would not be a good policy. Indeed, it would be a policy of despair, a policy that, as in Shakespeare's *King Lear*,

> "Bids the wind blow the earth into the sea,
> "...
> "That things might change or cease". (King Lear, *Act III, scene i, l. 5*)

A real solution to the conflict, as always, lies with those who are doing the fighting. We from outside must continue to show all the parties that the way forward is political agreement and not more military action. There is a settlement plan, the settlement plan of the Contact Group, on the table. Those who refuse it, those who continue the warfare, must be isolated, must be put under sustained - indeed, increased - pressure. Those who cooperate with the international peace plan effectively, in deeds and not just in words, should have that cooperation recognized.

I need to say a few words in response to the remarks made yesterday by the distinguished President of Argentina concerning the dispute over the Falkland Islands. President Menem was right - and I am glad that he mentioned it - when he referred to the increasing cooperation between the United Kingdom and Argentina in several areas. Indeed, this cooperation nowadays characterizes our bilateral relationship. And we certainly hope, sincerely hope, that the progress that we have achieved together will not be reversed.

We are quite clear about British sovereignty over the Falkland Islands and the other British dependencies in the South Atlantic, so we were concerned at the recent incorporation into the constitution of Argentina of the new clause to which President Menem referred. It seems to us that in these Falkland Islands, as in Northern Ireland, we must heed the wishes of the people concerned. Indeed, any other course for us or for the United Nations would be inconceivable. This body has heard those wishes of the Islanders expressed, most recently by their elected representatives who visited the United Nations for the debate in the Committee of 24 last July.

So we have a difference. But despite this difference, we have joined a dialogue with the Argentine Government on fisheries and petroleum development. We look forward to resuming discussions in the near future with the Argentine authorities on a new agreement on fishing and on the development of possible hydrocarbon resources in the South Atlantic continental shelf. We are also discussing the welcome Argentine offer to remove mines from the Falklands. It seems to me that that is the rational and logical path to the wider progress of which the President of Argentina spoke.

I return to this Organization. It is often the target of criticism because it cannot solve every problem laid at its door. We all know that there is scope for improving the performance of the United Nations here in New York and, more critically, where the United Nations and its agencies are in action on the ground. The steps taken so far are a beginning, but only a beginning.

Machinery cannot run on thin air. The United Nations can only run on the fuel that we, its Member States, supply to it. So where it has failed, we must not pretend that the failure lies with the system. It lies with

us. The failure of the United Nations is our failure, and so it is for us to take action. For example, the sufferings of the Rwandan refugees will not be helped by Member States' holding their heads in their hands. Their hands should be ready to provide from their pockets what is needed to remedy such suffering.

Preventive diplomacy is the ideal. But it often will not be enough. We have to be prepared for the demand for peace-keepers to continue. There are practical ways in which we can respond better to that demand: first, by ensuring that we learn the lessons from our experiences in peace-keeping; secondly, by taking practical steps to improve our capacity to keep the peace, especially in Africa; and, thirdly, by reforming our financing system.

I should like to say a brief word about peace-keeping. It is often impossible to predict at the outset of a mission what demands or dangers United Nations troops will encounter. Within limits, they must be ready to improvise. But allowing their role to drift from peace-keeping to taking sides in a war carries high risks to the troops themselves, to the political process they support, and to the ability of the United Nations to put in peace-keepers elsewhere. It undermines the willingness of Member States to contribute troops. So in making their decision to contribute to a United Nations operation countries need to be confident that their troops will be supporting peace and not becoming a party to war.

Rwanda put this to the test, and we were found wanting for a response for the time being. The issue was not really whether the United Nations should have sent an intervention force to stop the fighting - which it clearly could not - but whether it could find the means, the men and the equipment, for a force to protect the civilian population. That, tragically, took far too long.

That is the latest lesson we need to learn from. It is not now, it seems to me, a question of will, because there is a far greater readiness than there used to be to contemplate intervention on the ground to mitigate or prevent humanitarian disaster. It is not so much the will, the intellectual willingness; it is the resources, the know-how, the ability to respond swiftly, which are still not enough.

You, Mr. Secretary-General, have pointed this out over and over again, and I should like to pay tribute to the patience and persistence with which you have rammed home this lesson and sought not merely to tell us the truths about it but to persuade us into practical action and remedy. I agree with what you have said on many occasions. We need to work hard and fast to overcome obstacles which are essentially practical.

We British will continue to contribute practically. We have 4,000 British men and women in blue berets, from Georgia to Rwanda, something which would have been thought inconceivable even 10 years ago. We have the seconded British experts at United Nations Headquarters. The speed with which the Department of Peace-keeping Operations has adapted to cope with ever-increasing demand has been impressive. The development of the professional military staff at United Nations Headquarters has been particularly welcome. So has the trend to bring more seconded staff in alongside United Nations personnel. But it will be vital also to help to strengthen our ability to respond quickly in areas where it remains weak. Africa, in the light of experience, should be a priority.

Africa's need for peace-keepers is plain to see: nearly 40 per cent of all United Nations peace-keepers are deployed in Africa. Africa needs peace. There can be no doubt of that, because it is only in peace that Africans will succeed in finding their own solutions to their problems. The remarkable events in South Africa earlier this year showed that.

The efforts of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) to develop a coherent approach to the prevention of conflict are welcome. They deserve our full support. But the OAU has warned that its resources are not enough. I believe that the United Nations must respond. By setting up a coherent structure of support systems, running from early warning and preventive diplomacy right through to humanitarian and peace-keeping deployment on the ground, we can make sure that the skills and resources can be put into action as soon as the need arises, and not months later.

What does that mean? It means, first, an early warning system. Not all conflicts can be foreseen. Some are triggered by assassination or a *coup d'état* or other sudden events. More often, surely, we can see trouble brewing: competition for land and resources, ethnic or religious rivalry, the gradual breakdown of law and order, ill-judged responses by central governments. We need a mechanism to pull together information and analysis of events like these, to take a regular forward look at potential troublespots and decide whether preventive diplomacy needs to be triggered.

Then, secondly, it means a capacity to react, that is to say, to intervene diplomatically before warfare breaks out. We do not have that capacity now. Britain and France - we announced this last year - have offered help, making available experienced diplomats and offering equipment and support. There needs to be an institutional framework. In Europe we have the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), which operates to agreed principles and has intervened, for example, in Ukraine, Moldova and the Baltic States to try to help parties to resolve disputes before there is recourse to fighting. The OAU has its own experience of pre-emptive action, and it would clearly need to be the focal point of an enhanced effort in Africa. I am proposing that the United Nations should help the OAU and African countries to share this expertise and establish agreed mechanisms for preventive diplomacy in Africa.

But, thirdly, that will not always be enough. Peace-keeping skills will continue to be in demand. We must build up the necessary capabilities in Africa. Many African countries already make a major contribution to peace-keeping - Ghana, Egypt, Botswana, Zimbabwe and Zambia, to mention just some. But we all know the United Nations has not been able to deploy in Africa with the necessary speed and effectiveness.

I therefore propose that, under the auspices of the United Nations, a number of military staff colleges existing in Africa should become peace-keeping skills centres; that is to say, they should give training in doctrines and disciplines of peace-keeping, and in mediation and conflict resolution.

The physical capacity also needs to be strengthened if intervention is to be rapid when it is needed. That requires United Nations logistics basing centres, like those already existing in Europe, to store equipment and ensure that it is quickly available, with rapid mobile logistics teams, earmarked by Member States, to help to maintain that equipment in good running order and to give training and on-the-spot maintenance support. Again, the lesson of Rwanda is clear. These centres will also need headquarters staff to identify and remedy logistic weaknesses, give advice on maps or communications and advise existing and potential troop contributors.

These are not proposals for enormous new machinery. We need a framework within which existing resources, capability and know-how can be mobilized. We will strongly support such an effort. It needs further discussion - above all, among and with African countries. We would welcome such discussion soon, here in New York, to develop these ideas, other people's ideas and take some practical decisions quickly.

Finally, money. As you, Mr. Secretary-General, remind us, as you are bound to remind us, the United Nations at the moment works miracles with what we do not pay it. It simply cannot keep running on exhausted credit. It must be able to pay its peace-keepers, for example. We will not be able to build up the operations of the United Nations unless we act now to put the finances of the United Nations on a sound and sustainable footing for the long term.

No radical change in principles is needed, but we do need a sensible updating of the way in which assessments are calculated. The existing system was adopted in 1973. Much has changed. No one now would propose that States with above average per capita incomes should enjoy an 80 per cent discount on their peace-keeping contributions. No one now would suggest that discounts for all the newly independent Member States should be absorbed by five countries in an open-ended arrangement. But that is the system. It means that some countries are paying too much and others too little. It means that we now need to put these anomalies right. Moving to a system based on relative capacity to pay, with automatic adjustment for changing circumstances, would not mean very much change for most countries, but it would mean a fair, equitable basis on which the long-term viability and therefore vitality of the United Nations could be assured.

A word about the Security Council. Reform is on the agenda - that is quite right - and I believe it is in the interests of the United Nations to sort out the question of enlargement in good time. We would like the momentum of discussion to be maintained.

Next year's fiftieth anniversary is a good milestone for the debate. We will work hard for a good outcome, both on enlargement and on transparency, where recent informal arrangements to improve consultation on peace-keeping between the Secretariat, the Security Council and troop contributors should be further developed.

We should ensure that the Council is representative, while avoiding an enlargement so great that it puts at risk the effectiveness of the Council. If consensus can be reached, then clearly there are countries that, by virtue of their global interests and their contribution to international security and United Nations operations,

should be invited to accept the responsibilities of permanent membership.

I have concentrated today on how we deal with crises and defuse tensions. But, of course, those are only some of the challenges that our Organization faces. Drug trafficking and associated international crime are other threats to our security and well-being. We need to give new energy and encouragement to all those who are involved in developing cooperation against those threats. I mention this because I feel that we must give particular support to the United Nations International Drug Control Programme. This is the programme that has the responsibility for leading all the world's efforts in this field. Once again, the United Nations is the best resource we have for tackling a menace that threatens the whole world.

In conclusion, we can say confidently that the United Nations is indispensable. It is not a perfect glass palace, but it is the best building we have, even though the winds still blow cruelly through its gaps and its defects. We all, therefore, have a duty to repair, make good, build afresh.

Next year we will look back rightly on the achievements, and the list of achievements is long. But it will remind us, and we will remind ourselves, of what has not yet been achieved. And I hope that will stir us to show the same vision, the same strength of purpose as the founders of the United Nations, with, I hope, results of equal value for the next 50 years.

The President *(interpretation from French)*: I now call on the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of China, His Excellency Mr. Qian Qichen.

Mr. Qian Qichen (China) *(interpretation from Chinese)*: At the outset, I should like warmly to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the presidency of the current session of the General Assembly. I am convinced that given your outstanding talent and consummate experience, you will fulfil this lofty mission with distinction. At the same time, I should like to express my appreciation and thanks to Mr. Samuel Insanally for the positive contribution he made during his presidency at the last session.

I wish to avail myself of this opportunity to extend a hearty welcome and congratulations to the delegation of South Africa, which is taking part in the work of the current session. We are convinced that a united, democratic and non-racial new South Africa led by President Nelson Mandela will contribute positively to the peace and development of Africa and of the world as a whole.

The world is still undergoing profound changes, and the transition toward multipolarity has accelerated. Economic factors are playing a greater role in international relations. Relaxation of tensions has become the main trend of the world today. However, hegemonism and power politics continue to hold out. Regional hot spots flare up intermittently. Destabilizing factors tend to multiply, thus compounding the volatility of the international scene. The maintenance of peace, strengthening of cooperation and promotion of development remain the major challenges of our era.

To eliminate regional hot spots and settle international disputes are the world's priorities and the common concern with which the international community has been trying to deal in one way or another. Experience has shown that such practices as interfering in other countries' internal affairs and resorting to pressure, sanctions or even force at will cannot help; they can only increase the complications and difficulties that stand in the way of a final solution. In the interest of maintaining regional peace and stability, the international community and regional organizations should take an appropriate and effective approach, that is, to promote dialogue and negotiations between parties directly concerned so as to reach a solution acceptable to all sides. This has been best illustrated by the breakthrough achieved in the Middle East peace process and by the progress made on the Korean nuclear issue.

United Nations peace-keeping operations can play a positive role, but not all of them have been successful. Experience and lessons learned in this regard should be summed up. It is our consistent view that peace-keeping operations should strictly conform to the principles of the United Nations Charter and the norms of international relations. Such operations should be undertaken with the consent and cooperation of the parties concerned, and an impartial and unbiased attitude should be maintained. No peace-keeping operations or humanitarian aid programmes should be permitted to interfere in the internal affairs of any country, still less to use force or become embroiled in a conflict between the parties. A lesson should be drawn from what befell the United Nations peace-keeping forces in Somalia.

Here I wish to underline the importance of strict adherence to the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence

as the basic means to prevent international conflicts. These principles, namely, mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, mutual non-aggression, non-interference in each other's internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit, and peaceful coexistence, were jointly initiated four decades ago by China, India and Myanmar - called "Burma" at the time - and were subsequently embodied in the 10 principles formulated by Asian and African countries at the Bandung Conference and in the purposes and principles espoused by the Association of South-East Asian Nations and other regional organizations of the developing countries.

The history of the past four decades has testified to the immense vitality of the Five Principles. All nations, notwithstanding their differences in social systems, ideologies, values or religious faiths, can live in amity and carry out mutually beneficial cooperation as long as they abide by these principles. Failure to do so will lead to friction, confrontation or even military conflicts. In a world as diversified as ours, nations have no alternative but to adhere to the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence and to find common ground while shelving their differences in order to live together amicably and pursue common development.

The peoples of the world have long lived in the shadow of a nuclear holocaust, due to the all-out nuclear arms race between the two super-Powers during the cold war, which resulted in a massive stockpiling of nuclear weapons. Now the international situation has drastically changed. Not only can we avert another world war, but the chances have increased for the complete prohibition and thorough elimination of nuclear weapons and for mankind ultimately to eliminate the threat of a nuclear war.

China has always stood for the complete prohibition and thorough elimination of all weapons of mass destruction. The Chinese Government holds that a convention on the complete prohibition of nuclear weapons should be concluded in the same way as the conventions banning all biological and chemical weapons, respectively. As a signatory to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, China is in favour of its extension. Yet a mere extension of the Treaty is obviously not sufficient. With a view to ultimately ridding mankind of the threat of a nuclear war and ushering in a nuclear-weapon-free world, the Chinese Government proposes the following.

All countries that possess nuclear weapons should pledge unconditionally not to be the first to use them and should immediately start negotiations to conclude a treaty on non-first-use of nuclear weapons against each other; efforts for the establishment of nuclear-free zones should be supported and all nuclear Powers should undertake not to use or to threaten to use nuclear weapons against any non-nuclear-weapon State or nuclear-free zone; negotiations should be undertaken with a view to concluding a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty not later than 1996; the principal nuclear Powers should implement their existing nuclear disarmament treaties as scheduled and go on to drastically cut back their nuclear stockpiles; negotiations should be undertaken to conclude a convention banning the production of weapon-grade fissile materials; a convention on the complete prohibition of nuclear weapons should be signed under which all nuclear Powers should undertake the obligation to destroy all their nuclear weapons under effective international supervision; and international cooperation in the peaceful use of nuclear energy should be vigorously promoted simultaneously with the efforts to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons and step up the nuclear disarmament process.

The above points make up an integrated and interrelated nuclear disarmament process. We hold that all States, whether they possess nuclear weapons or not, are entitled to participate fully in this process.

Since mankind has been able to make nuclear weapons and tap nuclear energy for peaceful purposes in the twentieth century, we are confident that in the twenty-first century it will be able to completely ban and destroy nuclear weapons and fully harness nuclear energy to enhance its own welfare. Before the advent of the new century, we stand ready to join the other nuclear as well as non-nuclear States to blaze the way towards this lofty goal and make our due contribution to its ultimate realization.

It is now an international trend to give priority to economic problems. Hence all countries are devoting themselves to economic development and the expansion of international cooperation. This year the world economy has started a recovery and East Asia continues to maintain a high growth rate. But there is unevenness in the world as a whole. It is disturbing to note that the impoverishment of some developing countries has worsened. In the interest of common development, we call for the abolition of protectionism and of discrimination in international economic relations and trade. Neither global multilateral trade arrangements nor regional economic and trade cooperation should be exclusive. The principles of openness, equality and

mutual benefit should be upheld. The World Trade Organization, to be founded next year, should from the outset be a broadly representative and open trade institution based on equality and mutual benefit.

The world economy is an interdependent whole. Developed countries should make more tangible contributions to global economic development and the expansion of international economic cooperation. Primarily they should take effective measures to open their markets, provide development funds, transfer technology and increase assistance to the developing countries to reduce their debt burden, thereby contributing to their economic growth, social stability and relief from poverty. Such actions will in turn bolster the economic growth of the developed countries themselves.

The international community and the United Nations should be more concerned with development matters and in particular should actively help the developing countries to achieve prosperity. We appreciate the Secretary-General's efforts in submitting the Agenda for Development pursuant to General Assembly resolutions. We hope that our deliberations thereon will serve to reinvigorate world economic development and international cooperation.

The Chinese Government considers economic development the central task of the whole nation and makes reform and opening its basic state policy. This year we have taken a new series of major steps to intensify the reform and opening which have the effect of ensuring sustained, rapid and healthy economic growth. Gross domestic product, foreign trade volume and overseas investments registered increases in the first six months of 11.6 per cent, 25.5 per cent and 54.9 per cent respectively, compared with the corresponding period last year. We will step up our all-directional opening-up and continue to work for world prosperity. We have been striving for an early resumption of our contracting party status in the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade. A solution to this matter will be in the interest of both China and the world as a whole. China needs to cooperate with the rest of the world which in turn needs such an important trading partner as China. A World Trade Organization without China would be inconceivable.

Human society continues to move forward and make progress. But social ills still stand out starkly such as poverty, unemployment, the deteriorating environment, the population explosion, refugees, illegal immigration, drug trafficking, crime and injurious and unfair treatment of social groups such as women, children and the disabled. Some of these problems have become even more acute, and have cried out for a remedy by the world community through international cooperation. We consider that it is necessary to step up such cooperation. Because conditions vary, different countries face different social problems. Each country has to draw up social development policies adaptable to its own conditions. International cooperation in this field should adhere to the principles of mutual respect, equality and mutual benefit without political strings or interference in domestic affairs. Developing countries account for the majority of the world's population and are in a disadvantaged position socially. This is where the emphasis of the United Nations social programmes should be placed.

In recent years we have actively supported and participated in important international conferences on the environment, human rights and population under the auspices of the United Nations. We will actively take part in the World Summit for Social Development, to be held in Copenhagen next March. The Chinese Government attaches great importance to the Fourth World Conference on Women, to be held in Beijing in September 1995. The Chinese people, our women folk in particular, are preparing for and looking forward to this grand event with tremendous enthusiasm.

In response to the call in the documents of the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, the Chinese Government has analysed the actual conditions in the country and drawn up "Agenda 21 - White Paper on China's Population, Environment and Development in the 21st Century", which will be an important guide in the formulation of our medium- and long-term national, economic and social development plans.

To ensure and protect human rights is an essential part of a nation's social policy. My Government makes it a basic policy to constantly enhance the people's enjoyment of human rights commensurate with our economic and social development. We always hold that the principle of universality of human rights must be viewed in the context of the actual conditions of a given country. Conditions vary from country to country. It is inevitable and normal that there is divergence of views on human rights issues. We are in favour of dialogue on the basis of equality and mutual respect so as to increase mutual understanding. We are against using human rights as a pretext to interfere in the internal affairs of other countries.

Next year will mark the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations. Both the world and the United Nations have undergone drastic changes in that half century. The United Nations is the most representative intergovernmental Organization of sovereign States. Members of the Organization are equal, irrespective of size, strength or wealth.

Notwithstanding its shortcomings, the status and role of the United Nations in global international affairs remain irreplaceable by any other international organizations or groupings. It is the hope of the people of the world that the Organization will better fulfil the mission conferred on it by the Charter and and that it will make even greater contributions to the maintenance of peace and the promotion of development.

To cope with the greatly changed international situation and grim challenges ahead, United Nations institutions should undergo relevant and necessary reforms. In our view, any such reforms should serve to maintain and enhance the positive role of the United Nations in international affairs and improve its efficiency. At the same time, the reforms should take full account of the concerns and interests of the developing countries, which make up the majority of the membership, so that their role may be enhanced. The function and role of the General Assembly should be strengthened. Reform of the Security Council must be aimed at facilitating a better performance of its functions under the Charter. Any enlargement of the Council's membership must fully conform to the principle of equitable geographical distribution to ensure broader representation. Actions by the Council should better reflect the collective will and common aspirations of the entire United Nations membership.

To prepare for the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, China has set up a national committee, in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolution. We hope that the commemoration in various countries in the coming year will be used to review the experience of the past and look to the future so that we may carry forward the purposes and principles of the Charter and enable the Organization to do a better job in maintaining peace and promoting development.

It was sad that the first half of our century witnessed two world wars with disastrous consequences for mankind. The ensuing cold war cast a dark and menacing shadow of war over the world for the greater part of the second half of the century. It is gratifying, none the less, that we have been able to fulfil the historic mission of eliminating the centuries-old colonial system from the Earth within this century. This is unquestionably one of the greatest achievements of contemporary human society.

Looking ahead to the twenty-first century, we are fully confident of the future of humanity. The Chinese people will make common efforts with all other peoples of the world to usher in a new century of peace and prosperity.

The President *(interpretation from French)*: The next speaker is the Minister for Foreign Affairs of France, His Excellency Mr. Alain Juppé.

Mr. Juppé (France) *(interpretation from French)*: France is especially pleased, Mr. President, to see the General Assembly meeting under your authority. At the end of a year marked by the passing of an extraordinary statesman, President Houphouët-Boigny, your election has given the international community another occasion to stop and think about the situation in the African continent, which in recent months has brought us both hope and tragedy.

In South Africa, a decisive evolutionary process took concrete form this year in the first elections there with universal suffrage. We can now express our joy at seeing that country take its rightful place in the concert of nations. The choice of the South African people, inspired by outstanding men to whom France wishes again to pay a tribute, provides an example for all those who aspire to democracy, reconciliation and peace and gives them hope.

In Rwanda, on the other hand, an unprecedented tragedy has set the international community's responsibility squarely before it. The Assembly is familiar with the efforts made by France to respond to that tragedy and with the support it managed to find, primarily among the African States. The operation that was carried out enabled us to shelter more than 3 million Rwandans from the fighting. None the less, we have found it necessary once again to say the word "genocide", which, almost 50 years after the birth of the United Nations, amounts to saying that the worst is still possible.

During the darkest years of the Second World War, General De Gaulle spoke of the need to establish a world order that could guarantee the security of all, to make rational use of all the world's riches and to bring together all the people on the face of the Earth. The time has

come for us to rediscover the ideal that inspired the generation of the founders and to ask ourselves with clarity what means are necessary to implement it.

Almost everywhere in the world we are seeing the positive movement of nation-States into groups. France has made the building up of Europe one of the pillars of its foreign policy. How could it not, then, encourage the formation of new areas of solidarity?

The experience of building Europe, which began 40 years ago, is a case in point. It has done more than just do away with the age-old rivalries that had led to two world wars. In the western part of the European continent, economic integration and political cooperation have attained a level that is unmatched in the world.

Since the iron curtain ceased to exist, we have been primarily concerned with expanding to all parts of Europe the zone of peace and prosperity resulting from that process. This explains our desire to speed up the integration of the Central and Eastern European democracies into the European Union. It also accounts for our efforts to organize a partnership with Russia and the States of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). The European Union, the Western European Union (WEU), the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) are all coooperating in the efforts towards this end. Furthermore, it explains France's initiative, taken up in turn by the European Union, to establish a stability pact. This is an ambitious exercise in preventive diplomacy, aimed at resolving issues of relations between neighbours and of minority groups, where such issues persist in the European theatre.

Today Europe is a world power, as it demonstrated during the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) negotiations, at which its efforts led, notably, to the establishment of a World Trade Organization (WTO). This is a major success that will benefit all its member countries by putting an end to unilateral practices and guaranteeing fair and free trade. Europe is thus assuming its international responsibilities. It is actively supporting the peace processes in the Middle East, in southern Africa and elsewhere. It has long been involved in the struggle to achieve development, particularly through the Lomé Conventions. It provides substantial financing everywhere - the most in the world - for peoples mired in humanitarian crises. Its actions prove that a genuine regional power can benefit the entire international community.

New regional groups of solidarity are gradually taking shape in all parts of the world. In Africa, France supports the principle of an OAU mechanism for preventing, handling and settling conflicts. We are ready to help set up a military mechanism to enable the OAU to intervene more quickly, under United Nations control, in the framework of peace-keeping operations.

In South-East Asia, the countries of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) are working to strengthen their economic ties and to establish confidence-building measures to reinforce the stability of the region. France, which through the European Union was present at ASEAN's regional forum on security, held recently in Bangkok, takes a special interest in the beneficial effects this process should have on the countries of the Indo-Chinese peninsula.

On the American continent, the entry into force of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) adds to the dynamism of existing regional organizations, old and new.

Thus, perhaps, there may be such a group in the Middle East as well, where progress in the peace process allows us to envision the development of intensive regional cooperation. The organization of all kinds of ties among the countries concerned will help to establish peace in the region, as will the search for solutions to the political problems that are still pending. France can therefore only repeat that we hope to see the boycotts finally ended. Our financial support for the peace process, as well as our active participation in the multilateral negotiations, including participation in such ultra-sensitive areas as regional security, reflect this very same conviction.

Above and beyond that, France would like to see Europe organize a forum for cooperation involving all the Mediterranean States. We have, on the initiative of Egypt, already made a contribution to the coming into being of the Mediterranean Forum, which recently held its first meeting in Alexandria. We will make this one of the main goals of the French presidency of the European Union in the first semester of the coming year.

Everywhere, then, the progress being made in processes leading to integration and the establishment of regional frameworks for cooperation reflects positive trends. These organizations, however, have neither the right nor the capability to do everything. It is the United Nations that is and must remain the sole forum for

organizing peace and solidarity throughout the world. It is up to the United Nations and to that Organization alone to ensure international equilibrium since, in the last resort, it alone has the power to decide on enforcement measures or on the use of force. Regional organizations do contribute to peace and international stability. They may indeed fulfil missions in preventive diplomacy, but they must then be inspired by the principles enshrined in the United Nations. As regards peace-keeping, Chapter VIII of our Charter expressly provides that the United Nations may, in certain circumstances, employ the means at the disposal of the regional organizations.

But when conflicts become exacerbated, when a crisis calls for a mandatory solution, the Charter requires us to turn to the Security Council, the sole authority having power to decide on enforcement measures or on the use of force other than for legitimate self-defence. The justification for such measures may come only from the will of the international community, and that is why the Security Council, in our view, must exert its authority and control at all stages of operations it may decide upon: conception and approval of the mandate, the major phases of implementation and the monitoring of implementation.

The adoption of a system of mandatory sanctions against States that breach international legality is also a prerogative of the Security Council. But, and we are very keenly aware of this, this concerns serious, exceptional measures whose purpose must be precisely defined to bring pressure to bear on a Government to change its attitude. That is the objective in such instances. France therefore proposes that in future, when a resolution imposing sanctions upon a Member State is to be voted upon, three conditions must be met. These are, that all other diplomatic avenues have been explored without success; that the Council resolution state explicitly what actions the targeted State should take in order for the sanctions to be lifted; and that the maintenance of the sanctions should be subject to regular review in good faith.

In the realm of disarmament, our Organization is once again the sole forum where international commitments may be entered into. Given this perspective, France ascribes especial importance to the speedy ratification of the Convention banning chemical weapons - the first multilateral disarmament treaty - and thereby its entry into force in 1995. France hopes to see our Organization make progress towards strengthening the Convention banning biological weapons and to see new efforts made to ban anti-personnel mines. I was particularly pleased to hear President Clinton endorse this very concept in his recent statement to the Assembly. Finally, the requirement for non-proliferation, which North Korea's attitude compels us to take especially seriously, must lead, at the 1995 Conference, to the unconditional and indefinite renewal of the non-proliferation Treaty. In this same vein, France reaffirms its support for the decision taken by the General Assembly last year to begin negotiations on a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty that would be internationally and effectively verifiable.

Over recent years, crisis prevention and crisis management have absorbed the greater part of our efforts. We have thus imperceptibly strayed somewhat from what was a major chapter in the history of the United Nations: the North-South dialogue, the major conferences on trade and development. France thus proposes that the United Nations restore development and the struggle to achieve it to their central place in its work.

It is not a question of repeating what was done in past decades. Our approach to development has changed. The work pursued under the auspices of the United Nations and its agencies has helped to call attention to the interdependence of the economic, demographic, cultural and social ramifications of the development question. That is why the main theme conferences devoted to the environment, to population, to social development and to the status of women are now once again the instruments to be used to mobilize for development. Given this perspective, France will organize in Paris before the end of this year the signing of the Convention on the struggle against desertification, as well as the Aids Summit.

The United Nations alone is capable of ensuring that all these efforts be pursued consistently. It has the necessary legitimacy and authority, inasmuch as all the main institutions concerned, including what are known as the Bretton Woods institutions, are part and parcel of the United Nations system. We therefore consider it necessary to strengthen the links that unite all these separate bodies. In particular, we should ensure that the policies of adjustment carried out under World Bank or International Monetary Fund auspices take due account of the social requirements of development. France is committed to doing so in working with its partners, and has recently agreed to a substantial effort to help the franc zone countries overcome the short-term effects of the devaluation of the CFA franc.

The Economic and Social Council should be the place for ensuring coherence and consistency within these

organizations. France therefore proposes that the next annual meeting of the Council in Geneva should be an opportunity for the ministers of Member States personally to undertake a complete examination of the policies followed by these various institutions with regard to development, and especially to study specific ways by which they might work together better.

The Secretary-General's efforts for renewal and clarification through the "Agenda for Development" naturally form part of this global approach. The European Union, for its part, has presented recommendations in its *aide-mémoire* that it believes would enhance that draft. France intends to take an active part in General Assembly discussions on this subject.

The role of our Organization is no less critical where humanitarian action is involved. France intervenes regularly on the ground alongside United Nations agencies, and we should like to pay a tribute to the outstanding work done by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the World Food Programme and UNICEF, working under tragically difficult circumstances. We were able to appreciate in full measure their usefulness as the Rwandan crisis unfolded. We have had confirmation that the United Nations alone is able to coordinate such difficult operations. Naturally, there is need for further progress: in shortening the Organization's reaction time, and in better allocating tasks among agencies. But the reform that began three years ago with the establishment of the Department for Humanitarian Affairs is beginning to bear fruit. We are indeed on the right track.

Lastly, France would like to stress the underlying principle of international law: the universality of human rights, a principle which may not be challenged in the name of any religious, cultural or national specificities. I am all the more ready to say that because France is itself keen on preserving its identity and intent on defending it. However different people may be, they share the same rights. The very existence of our Organization rests on this principle.

France has consistently urged the acceleration of progress in the field of human rights, by seeking recognition that certain principles must be applied to States' actions. I welcome the steps taken by the High Commissioner for Human Rights since his designation and express the hope that the resources made available to him will be commensurate with his mission.

The establishment of the International Tribunal for war crimes committed in the former Yugoslavia is a significant event. Until very recently there had been some scepticism about this initiative. Today, thanks to the resolve of the Tribunal's judges and prosecutor, it is in place and beginning to examine actual cases being submitted to it. France supports these efforts and hopes that comparable crimes of genocide that may have been committed in Rwanda will also lead to the establishment of an international legal body.

The juridical work of the United Nations extends to other areas as well. It is designed to address matters of international trade with a view to making it both freer and fairer. In this regard, I have already expressed our satisfaction at the establishment of the World Trade Organization. The signing a few weeks ago of an act that completes the monumental work done by the United Nations on the law of the sea is also a historic event.

If our Organization is to be able to carry out the many difficult tasks which I have just described, we must constantly work to reform it and adjust the means available to it - in the first place, by strengthening the means available to the Secretary-General. On behalf of France, I should like to pay a tribute here to the Secretary-General - and this is not a mere formality. We have the good fortune to have at the helm of our Organization a man who, thanks to his ceaseless efforts over the past two years, has made progress possible in all areas: preventive diplomacy, crisis management, development, the running of the institution. We must therefore give him the means to continue his work.

This is true, too, of peace-keeping missions. Recent experience has shown the need to make military forces available to the Secretary-General on very short notice in the implementation of Security Council resolutions. To that end, France wishes to develop a network of stand-by forces. On the initiative of the President of the Republic, we have offered to make a standing unit of several thousand men available to the United Nations. It is also essential for the Secretary-General to be able to control the evolution of peace-keeping missions. To that end, France recommends systematic recourse to the designation of a special representative.

The Secretary-General must be able to rely on the assistance of prominent and particularly competent persons. With regard to management, last year's establishment of the post of Inspector General marked an important step forward. We expect further progress to

be made this year with the establishment of a committee on budgetary discipline, as I proposed last year from this very rostrum. Lastly, as our Prime Minister has suggested, France proposes that someone be appointed on a permanent basis to the Secretary-General's Office who would deal with the question of the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

Our Assembly is the most universal of international institutions. Its prestige and authority must therefore be strengthened. To that end, France is making three proposals.

First, sessions of the Fifth Committee must be held more closely together in order to ensure better control over our finances, particularly with regard to peace-keeping operations.

Secondly, there must be more frequent missions of the Assembly to deal with certain crisis situations, as was done in the cases of Haiti and South Africa. The financial reform of the United Nations, which has been discussed for several years now, must be set in motion. Following the work of the high-level Working Group established last year to consider the question of enlarging the Security Council, France proposes that a group, led by the President of the General Assembly, be set up this year to make proposals that could lead to the financial reform of our Organization.

Thirdly, we must work to achieve the enlargement of the Security Council. This question has already been the focus of in-depth discussions that have clarified the positions at issue. For its part, France has no panacea to offer, but it believes that the solution must answer the dual imperative of efficacy and representativeness.

On the one hand, if the Security Council is to function efficiently, given its tasks and the circumstances in which it intervenes, its capacity to take important decisions quickly must clearly be maintained. But the Council must also allow for full public debate in reaching its decisions. Hence, we are in favour of the Council's holding official meetings - without of course giving up its informal consultations - to hear Members of the Organization and talk with them before taking positions on the important questions before it. We believe that this is the appropriate response to the demand for transparency made by many delegations.

On the other hand, the Council's authority and thus its efficacy also depend on its representativeness. We therefore favour the enlargement of the Council to include new permanent and non-permanent members. France confirms its support for the desires of Germany and Japan to accede to permanent membership. It also considers that the representatives of the developing world should in no case find themselves marginalized by any future reform.

The United Nations exists and acts only through the will of its Member States. Though that is obvious it bears repeating. Any failure of our Organization is in fact the failure of those same States - that is, as my colleague from the United Kingdom stated earlier today, our own failure. Its efficacy depends above all on the degree of commitment each of us brings to it.

Without the commitment of States there can be no solution to the financial crisis of the United Nations. Each of us is aware of the gravity of our Organization's financial situation. Each of us also knows that this critical situation is not the result solely of the sum total of expenditures. The real source of our crisis is well known: it is the negligence of States which do not pay their contributions or do not pay them in full.

Of course, we welcome the fact that one of the main contributor countries has decided to pay a substantial part of its arrears, thereby bringing temporary relief to the Organization's financial situation. We can understand why some Member States are requesting that the scale of contributions be adjusted in order better to reflect real abilities to pay. France hopes that at the present session the General Assembly will address the revision of this scale in accordance with the principle of fairness and in a spirit of consensus.

But fairness also requires swifter and more substantial reimbursement to States that provide the troops necessary to peace-keeping operations and are therefore the primary victims of late payments. The situation in which some in fact pay twice while others do not pay at all must come to an end. France therefore asks once again that a working group be established and mandated to propose all the measures that can encourage tardy States to pay their arrears.

And without the commitment of States there cannot be any solution to international instability. France has made considerable efforts to help resolve crises that have threatened the international order over the past few years. It has been the first and is now the second largest troop contributor to the United Nations. It has well-known experience in the three areas of preventive diplomacy,

peace-keeping and humanitarian action. Obviously, France does not wish to lecture anyone, but its own commitment does permit it to say that the readiness of States does not meet the demands made today upon our Organization.

Need we cite all the circumstances in which the non-participation or temporizing of States has compromised action mandated by the Security Council? How many weeks did we have to wait last year for the military arrangements provided for under Security Council resolution 824 (1993) on safe areas in Bosnia were finally in place? We all remember that, during the Rwandan crisis, the decision taken by the Security Council in mid-May to strengthen the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda had yet to be implemented two months later.

Rather than dwelling on these disappointments, however, France wishes to pay tribute to all those States that have shown, by their commitment and sense of international solidarity, that the United Nations can prove that it is effective. The African countries that chose to share with us the risks involved in the operation in Rwanda; the United States, which is working in Haiti to effect the implementation of Security Council resolution 940 (1994); the States whose soldiers stand with ours in the United Nations Protection Force: it is thanks to them that there remains a chance for peace in the former Yugoslavia, delayed only by the stubbornness of the Bosnian Serb leaders. France expects that the greatest of firmness will be used in dealing with these most recent warmongers. But the change in position of the other parties, and in particular the authorities in Belgrade, makes it incumbent upon us to continue to seek a negotiated settlement. In this spirit, we appeal to Presidents Izetbegovic, Tudjman and Milosevic, who have all accepted the peace plan for Bosnia, to resume the direct dialogue necessary for a comprehensive settlement. Otherwise, the international community must be prepared to propose the terms of a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement, taking into account the legitimate interests of the various communities that made up the former Yugoslavia and must enjoy equal rights.

Bringing to trial those responsible for war crimes is a moral imperative to which France is committed. We must above all make the people in the former Yugoslavia understand that there are prospects for the future other than endless violence and vengeance. That is France's message. That is the reason for the commitment of our soldiers in Bosnia and, sadly, the sacrifice of several dozen of them. There is nothing pre-ordained about failure to get involved, or inertia. There is a strong will at the heart of our Organization. Therefore France appeals to all Member States to mark the fiftieth anniversary with a genuine renewal of commitment.

Voices are being raised today urging our Organization to show greater realism in defining the missions that it has to carry out. In appealing to Member States to mobilize, France wishes to reaffirm its unwavering conviction that, in the face of the challenges to the international community, realism consists not in being less ambitious but in ensuring that we have the means fully to achieve our ambitions. They must not be limited to what seems possible; they must be to make possible what is obviously necessary. It is in this spirit that France will continue actively to play its role within the United Nations.

The President *(interpretation from French)*: I now call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, His Excellency Mr. Gennadi Udovenko.

Mr. Udovenko (Ukraine) *(spoke in Ukrainian; English text furnished by the delegation)*: It is a great honour for me to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the distinguished and very important post of President of the General Assembly.

I am confident that your knowledge, experience and consummate personal skills, which you have demonstrated both as Permanent Representative to the United Nations and as President of the Security Council, will allow the successful resolution of the complex problems the international community is now facing on the eve of the celebration of the United Nations half century.

I would like also to express my appreciation to the President of the previous session of the General Assembly, Ambassador Insanally, whose wise guidance resulted in the adoption of an entire set of constructive decisions to the benefit of all Member States of the United Nations.

The year that has elapsed since the previous session of the General Assembly has witnessed important international developments, in many of which the United Nations was both a catalyst and a participant. They included the historic turn towards peace in the Middle East and the elimination of the apartheid system in South Africa. Positive developments are expected in Ulster and in other hot spots of the planet. The completion of the withdrawal of Russian troops from Germany and the

Baltic States has at last marked the end of the European history of the Second World War. In this context, the leaders of the Russian Federation should be given their due for displaying political courage and foresight.

Radical changes have also taken place in the political, social and economic life of Ukraine, which recently celebrated the third anniversary of its independence. The Ukrainian people, of their own free will, in a truly democratic way, elected Leonid Kuchma as the new President, and has elected the Parliament of the country. New leaders have come to executive power. Naturally, all of these developments are generating broad interest in, and closer attention to, Ukraine.

In this connection, different - sometimes arbitrary - predictions have been made concerning the direction of our domestic and foreign policies, and even regarding their possible reorientation. Many radical and even diametrically opposed views have been heard - for example, whether the political pendulum in Ukraine will swing to the East or West, or whether Ukraine will remain an independent State and preserve its political sovereignty.

In taking the opportunity to speak from this rostrum, I should like to clarify these important issues.

First, the State policy of Ukraine will be consistently based on the authority established by the Ukrainian people when it confirmed, almost unanimously, its choice of independent development during the national referendum held in December 1991. This reality is decisive, and rumours that Ukraine will eventually lose its sovereignty are absolutely unfounded. We shall continue to follow the path of building an independent State, and a return to the situation which prevailed in the former Soviet Union is impossible.

Secondly, what also seems to be an oversimplification is the question of where Ukraine will be, whether in the East or the West, of where it will go. I think it is precisely here in this Hall, which brings together representatives of all continents and regions of the world, that the artificial division into East, West, North and South is especially strongly felt. Today the world is becoming more integrated, and political indicators of geographical affiliation of countries are gradually disappearing. Ukraine, like any other State, cannot simply "go" East or West. It is there, where it has been for ages, and where it will stay for ever. Its main task as a historically ancient but politically young State consists in gradual integration into the European and world political, economic, humanitarian and other processes as a reliable link in a new global system of international relations.

Of course, there will be corrections to our policy. The world has changed considerably, even in comparison with that period of time when Ukraine emerged on the political map as an independent State. All of us, including Ukraine, have to take into account new realities and respond to them appropriately. This is particularly so when we deal with the question of the intensification of mutually beneficial and equitable cooperation with the Russian Federation and with the other countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). But these relations will by no means be developed at the expense of our contact with our other partners. Ukraine is equally concerned with strengthening relations with the United States; Germany; Canada; the countries of Central and Eastern Europe; the States of Asia - above all, China and Japan; as well as other countries of the Asian-Pacific region, Africa and Latin America. In other words, the range of our foreign policy interests is very broad. I would like to emphasize that at the international level Ukraine will protect its national interests, including its economic interests, with increasing dynamism and pragmatism.

These are the corrections that will be made to Ukraine's foreign policy, which, despite domestic political changes, remains, as President Leonid Kuchma has stated, predictable, consistent and weighted. There can be no doubt whatsoever in this respect: Ukraine has been committed, and will continue to be committed, to fulfilling its international obligations, consistently and in good faith. This is a solid foundation of our foreign policy.

The wave of political romanticism yielded to a time of severe trials in the political, social and economic lives of the newly independent States that emerged from the former Soviet Union. Linking the titles of two well-known novels, the overall tenor of the mood of society in the post-communist world might be described as "great expectations gone with the wind".

To speak frankly, those feelings were not spared Ukraine, which immediately declared its readiness to cooperate honestly and openly with all interested partners. However, our State, after having made persistent efforts, has felt that only recently has the world community come to understand its position. At the same time, the reality of the current situation of Ukraine is that we are still the subject of pressure and suspicion from

outside and that we continue at times to encounter open reluctance to understand the essence of the problems we are facing. This greatly aggravates the present and still difficult economic situation in the country and hinders the process of market reforms.

Today, Ukraine is facing the difficult tasks of overcoming an economic crisis, of normalizing its social and economic situation and of creating favourable domestic and international conditions for gradually raising the living standard of its population. The President and the new Government are focusing their efforts on those tasks, but I must note that Ukraine's problem in surmounting its economic crisis has an international dimension as well since, because of its geopolitical situation, the establishment of Ukraine as a sovereign and economically developed State is an important factor for peace and stability on the continent of Europe. There is therefore every reason to assert that support for Ukraine - both political and, especially, economic - is a reliable investment in the strengthening of international security. These facts are gradually being accepted, and the discussion of the Ukrainian question at the Naples Summit Meeting of the Group of 7 was evidence of this trend.

The existence of a group of countries undergoing transition to a market economy has become a real factor in current international relations. Ukraine is a part of that group. Our experience is showing that the transition period will not be smooth, that it will be fairly lengthy and that it will necessitate considerable effort, including international effort. There is, however, no alternative. Those very aspects of statecraft will be the focus of President Kuchma's attention in the policy statement he will soon deliver to the Parliament. I should also like to note that the difficult economic situation in our country can to a considerable extent be explained by the vast financial burden of nuclear disarmament and the eradication of the aftermath of the Chernobyl disaster. Those problems are not solely Ukrainian; they have a global dimension as well. In this connection, one positive development is the fact that the problems of countries undergoing the transition to a market economy are gradually coming to occupy a rightful place in the varied activities of the United Nations and its specialized agencies.

However, it seems that donor States, while declaring their support for the implementation of reforms in countries undergoing transition, are still being excessively cautious in providing adequate support to specific projects in Eastern Europe and in the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). Today, that attitude is beginning to pose a serious problem.

We are also looking forward to target-oriented activities by the international community designed to create favourable conditions for free access to the world market for exports from countries in this region, particularly Ukraine. In this connection, Ukraine welcomes the establishment of the World Trade Organization (WTO) and firmly intends to accede to the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT)/WTO system. We hope that that system will promote trade liberalization and facilitate the creation of an open and transparent system of trade. After all, the intensification of international trade is an integral part of economic development.

As a European country, we are primarily concerned with the problem of security in Europe in the broadest sense of that term. I should like to express some views concerning Ukraine's vision of ways to safeguard peace and stability on that continent.

The difficulties of making forecasts in the field of international relations can be explained by the number of new risks and challenges to security that have been created by political, economic, inter-ethnic and other contradictions. These have already generated a wave of conflicts to which Europe was not prepared to make an adequate response.

The anxiety on the continent of Europe is clearly demonstrated by the ongoing search for new machinery to ensure State security in Eastern and Central Europe, of which Ukraine is also a part. The point is not that appropriate structures to strengthen security in Europe do not exist. There are the activities of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the Western European Union (WEU) and the North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC), and the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States are also seeking ways to achieve collective security. However, for various reasons none of those structures is able adequately to fill the military and political vacuum created in the region following the disintegration of the USSR and the Warsaw Treaty.

That is why Ukraine strongly supports initiatives aimed at all-European cooperation in various fields, including the field of security.

I should like to recall that Ukraine was the first of the CIS countries to become a signatory of the NATO Partnership for Peace programme and the Agreement on Partnership and Cooperation with the European Community. The Ukraine became a party to the Conference on the Pact on Stability in Europe and has put forward initiatives for the strengthening of security and cooperation in Central and Eastern Europe and in the Black Sea region.

However, it should be acknowledged that, notwithstanding all their positive features, neither the Partnership for Peace programme nor any other measures undertaken can yet ensure reliable security safeguards for the States concerned.

In the existing situation it seems reasonable to focus attention on a detailed examination of the question of creating an all-European security structure that would involve all the existing structures in this field - the CSCE, the NACC, NATO, the WEU - and, of course, the States of the former USSR should have an appropriate place in that structure. Ukraine advocates just such an approach, namely, the strengthening of partnership and cooperation in an all-European dimension rather than a search for new geometrical schemas which would, in fact, solidify the division of the European continent, small as it is on the global scale.

We feel that the strengthening of stability and security in the all-European sphere can and must be supplemented by regional actions that could be organically integrated into the overall process of confidence-building and constructive cooperation.

Mr. Ansari (India), Vice-President, took the Chair.

In the search for such steps, Ukraine put forward the initiative on confidence-building measures in the region of the Black Sea. This region is extremely important to us as a crossroads between Europe and Asia and between North and South. The elaboration and implementation of specific confidence-building measures in the military and political fields in the Black Sea region would promote good-neighbourly relations and political and economic cooperation between the Black Sea countries.

Multilateral consultations on these issues have already begun. Ukraine proceeds on the basis that all Black Sea countries may participate in confidence-building measures. We believe that the measures themselves should be identified in a politically binding document, which would regulate naval activities on the Black Sea, establish a procedure for the exchange of appropriate information and promote the development of contacts between the naval forces of States parties.

The principle of collective action aimed at the maintenance of peace under appropriate international control must be one of the important conditions for the operation of an all-Europe security system. At the present stage, national and international security is threatened not so much by the possibility of military aggression from outside as by local and regional conflicts provoked by domestic circumstances - economic, ethnic, religious and others - and especially by the possibility of their spilling over and involving neighbouring countries. This requires timely preventive action.

Assessing recent developments in the world, we have to recognize that, on the whole, preventive diplomacy is coming to the foreground of United Nations activities aimed at securing, restoring and strengthening peace and of activities of the CSCE. In this context, I should like to express gratitude to Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, the United Nations Secretary-General, for his significant personal contribution to the development of the foundations in this extremely important field of international activity.

We greatly appreciate United Nations peace-keeping efforts aimed at settling regional conflicts. We realize that such activities require intensive political, physical and financial support from Member States. Unfortunately, the difficult economic situation of our State - not to mention the unjustified excessively high contribution to the regular budget - prevents Ukraine from meeting in full its financial obligation to the United Nations. However, we are trying to compensate, at least partially, through our contribution to the peace-keeping forces.

Ukraine has already become one of the major contributors to United Nations forces, and it remains ready to cooperate in this field. We believe that appropriate protection and security for the peace-keeping personnel are essential conditions for such cooperation. Let us consider the sad statistics. In the course of all United Nations operations more than 1,000 peace-keepers have been killed. In the territory of the former Yugoslavia nine Ukrainian servicemen gave their lives, and more than 30 persons were wounded. The problem of security for United Nations personnel becomes more acute every year. When sending its troops to

Yugoslavia, Ukraine took the initiative of developing an international convention on the protection of United Nations peace-keepers and of submitting a draft of the document. We now await with hope the completion, during the current session, of work on this question.

Developments in the former Yugoslavia and in Somalia compel us to think about the problems of the effectiveness of United Nations peace-keeping operations. The fact that the United Nations, even using the potential of such a powerful organization as NATO, failed to extinguish the flames of bloody conflict in these countries obviously calls for a more thorough examination and a closer definition of principles of United Nations peace-keeping operations. First and foremost, there are such questions as a precise mandate, a link with the negotiating process, the neutrality of the United Nations contingent, the reasons for coercive action and the concept of multinational forces.

Today, with the transition to a multipolar world, it has become evident that no country, however great its potential for military power, can any longer pretend to be an effective guarantor of peace by relying exclusively on its own strength. This would be incompatible with the rules and principles of behaviour that are recognized throughout the world. Unfortunately, the United Nations proved not to be completely ready to assume this important role.

Operations have become increasingly expensive and unwieldy. During the last four years alone United Nations expenditure for these purposes has increased from $350 million to $2.8 billion, thus aggravating the chronic financial problems. In the opinion of the world community, peace-keeping operations have lost their element of the extraordinary and have become routine, and not always successful, emergency actions. But the main reason for the crisis in United Nations peace-keeping efforts has proved to be changes in the conditions and circumstances of conflicts.

Classic peace-keeping operations started after the end of the "hot" phase. That is why they were, in fact, quite effective means of conflict prevention. Now, in many cases, the United Nations intervenes when hostilities are at their height. This changes the principles of the use of peace-keeping forces. It is not always the case that the "blue helmets" are regarded by all the conflicting parties as welcome guests. That is why the United Nations forces' mandate is considerably wider than used to be the case. In some cases they have been given the right to use all available weapons - and not only in self-defence.

The parties to conflicts are often unable to provide adequate conditions for United Nations forces to accomplish their peace-making mission. A distinctive attribute of current conflicts is the phenomenon of field commanders. These people obey no one and, thus, compromise United Nations decisions or agreements reached within the framework of efforts aimed at achieving an armistice.

It is high time to renew the principles and mechanisms of peace-keeping operations on the basis of the United Nations Charter. We feel that it is necessary to accelerate the creation of United Nations rapid-deployment forces, which would recruit volunteers and would be extraterritorial in character. Ukraine has already declared its readiness to take part in this process.

An extremely important issue is the enhancement of the role of international law within the system of international relations and the creation of a climate between States that would completely exclude diktat, interference in internal affairs, the proclamation of so-called zones of special interests, and so on. The United Nations is also making a valuable contribution to strengthening the international rule of law. In this context, Ukraine advocates further enhancement of the rules and principles of international law - first and foremost, such basic principles as respect for the sovereignty of States; territorial integrity and the inviolability of borders; and the protection of individual human rights, including the rights of national minorities. Our State is committed to cooperating with other countries in this field.

Ukraine is also ready to make its contribution to the solution of other urgent problems. It is necessary that we should examine thoroughly and comprehensively the question of the implementation of economic sanctions against those who threaten peace and security. Previous United Nations experience in this field provides grounds for justified criticism of the effectiveness of such sanctions. It is time to give serious thought to the creation of machinery for the implementation of Article 50 of the United Nations Charter. This would protect the economic interests of third countries, which are suffering colossal losses as a result of the strict implementation of sanctions.

Ukraine has already lost more than $4 billion as a result of the implementation of sanctions against Yugoslavia. Unfortunately, the international structures did not extend appropriate assistance to enable our State

to overcome the economic difficulties caused by the embargo. Obviously, collective action aimed at implementing coercive measures cannot be taken on such an unfair basis, as this increases the danger of a loss of confidence in the device of sanctions.

Generally, the necessity of substantively reforming the United Nations, with a view to enhancing the effectiveness of the Organization while reducing at the same time the expenditures for its functioning, is a very serious problem. I am confident that this problem has ceased to be merely an administrative and budgetary one and is moving to the foreground as one of the major political problems. Many countries, including Ukraine, are currently encountering great difficulties in convincing their citizens that it is necessary to make excessively large contributions to the budget of international organizations.

There are still many outstanding problems in the field of arms control and disarmament, which traditionally occupy an important place in the foreign policy of Ukraine. We support efforts aimed at putting into force the chemical weapons Convention. We are taking an active part in the elaboration of effective mechanisms of international control regarding the implementation of the inhumane weapons Convention, the Convention on the prohibition of biological weapons, the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe, and other international instruments to which Ukraine is a party. We attach great importance to the preparation of the comprehensive test-ban treaty, which is now under way within the framework of the Conference on Disarmament. These activities prove that Ukraine is pursuing a consistent policy in the field of the prohibition of weapons of mass destruction, and they demonstrate its openness and readiness to cooperate, its commitment to respect the obligations assumed. Ukraine stands for the equality of all States parties to international treaties and supports the universality and non-discriminatory nature of these treaties.

It is precisely from such a position that Ukraine approaches nuclear disarmament, which, at the present stage, is its most complicated problem. It should be emphasized that Ukraine is the first State in the world that has voluntarily and unilaterally assumed the obligation of eliminating nuclear weapons located in its territory - the third nuclear potential in the world - and that intends to achieve the status of a non-nuclear Power.

The decision on non-nuclear status was approved by the Parliament of Ukraine for the benefit both of the highest interests of our State and of mankind as a whole. This decision was based on the profound belief of our people in the morality of the non-nuclear option and was not the result of any external pressure.

At the same time, Ukraine, as a State that of its own free will is giving up nuclear weapons - this most effective means of deterrence - obviously has the right to obtain reliable security guarantees from other nuclear States and adequate economic and technical assistance from the international community for the elimination of these weapons.

Unfortunately, our partners did not immediately comprehend these just demands, and we lost a lot of time. The Ukraine Parliament's conditions for revoking its reservations at the time of the ratification of the START Treaty and the Lisbon Protocol, and for proceeding with the practical withdrawal of nuclear warheads from Ukraine with the view to their further elimination, were created only after the Trilateral Statement by the Presidents of Ukraine, the United States and the Russian Federation was signed and the relevant implementation agreements were concluded.

Very soon the Parliament of Ukraine intends to consider the accession of our State to the non-proliferation Treaty. Today, the settlement of this issue depends mainly on the finalization of an acceptable text of the document concerning the provision of guarantees for Ukraine's national security by the nuclear States.

Ukraine stands for corresponding guarantees to be multilateral and to be addressed directly to Ukraine as that State which for the first time in history, on its own, is getting rid of nuclear weapons; these guarantees should provide a mechanism of consultations, which could become involved should the security of Ukraine be threatened. In this process, we attach great importance to the role of the United Nations as the most authoritative international organization.

In conclusion, I would like to express optimism concerning the future development of the United Nations and international co-operation. Current international life is highly complicated and contradictory: there are alarming moments and there are frustrations, but there are also truly historical shifts which have led to the end of the cold war and to the transition to constructive co-operation. It is highly symbolic that this is happening on the eve of the fiftieth anniversary of our Organization, which emerged from the ruins of the Second World War. On behalf of Ukraine, which suffered very heavy losses

in that war, I would like to support the proposal to proclaim 1995 the universal year of commemoration of the victims of this, the bloodiest of wars.

Present-day realities are laying a sound foundation for global cooperation, stability and peace. Let us therefore make every effort not to lose this historic opportunity.

The President: I now call upon the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Greece, His Excellency Mr. Karolas Papoulias.

Mr. Papoulias (Greece) *(spoke in Greek; English text furnished by the delegation)*: Allow me at the outset to extend to Mr. Amara Essy the warmest congratulations of the Greek Government on his election to the presidency of the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly. We are particularly pleased that his presence this year will provide the African States, with which Greece maintains excellent relations, with a further opportunity to make an essential contribution to the successful outcome of our work. I would also like to thank Ambassador Insanally for the constructive and efficient manner in which he performed his duties as President of the General Assembly during its forty-eighth session.

I wish to take this opportunity to address sincere congratulations to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, who is striving with courage, energy, political will, vision and perspicacity for a new world, a world in which law and ethics will prevail, and for the restructuring of the Organization to enable it to meet the challenges of our time. He has our full support in his efforts to fulfil his mission.

The Foreign Minister of Germany, in his capacity as President of the Council of the European Union, delivered a statement yesterday on behalf of the European Union and its member States. My Government subscribes to its content. However, I should like to address some issues of particular interest to Greece which, apart from the statement of my German colleague, Klaus Kinkel, are further elaborated in the European Union's memorandum.

The United Nations is facing the challenges and preoccupations of our times. And now, more than ever, it must become the forum to which all those who are suffering injustice will naturally resort, knowing that justice will be done. To this end, it is the duty of all to abide by the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, which they have accepted of their own free will, and to observe the rules, to the development and establishment of which they have contributed. In this context, all must respect United Nations resolutions, particularly those of the Security Council, the body on which the international community has conferred primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. This is the only way in which we can strengthen the moral stature of the United Nations and contribute to the attainment of its goals.

Bearing this in mind, we welcome and strongly support the efforts of the Secretary-General in the area of preventive diplomacy and the maintenance and promotion of international peace and security, within a broader framework which, in addition to the political and military aspects, also has an economic and social dimension, particularly with respect to the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Respect for human rights constitutes one of the most important factors for the maintenance of international peace and security and must be regarded as a prerequisite for development in all areas and for democratic existence. The Vienna World Conference on Human Rights was an important milestone, as was the establishment of the post of High Commissioner for Human Rights, whose mandate we fully support, and the mission of the Centre for Human Rights. The principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, as well as other international acts and instruments, should guide the actions of all Member States on a daily basis.

The international community is called upon to confront many problems among the Members of the Organization. Fortunately, considerable progress has been achieved during the past year with regard to some of them.

I should like first to refer to the case of the Middle East. Greece, a neighbouring country and a traditional friend of the peoples in the region, is particularly pleased by the continuous and promising steps taken recently to strengthen peace and security and to arrive at satisfactory arrangements for the Palestinian people, steps which will open up prospects for a final, generally acceptable, settlement of the long-lasting Middle East crisis.

The other case I should like to mention is that of the restoration of democracy in South Africa. Who would not agree that the peaceful change achieved in that country by leaders such as President Mandela and Vice-President De Klerk, is an example to follow? This

change was made possible, however, only because both men had the will to abolish the system of apartheid and to establish a democracy based on tolerance and respect for human rights.

In both cases Greece did its utmost to contribute to the successful outcome of the efforts pursued to achieve these results.

However, during the same period of time, mankind has had to endure crises which have caused incalculable loss of human life and tremendous suffering. Unfortunately, there are many such examples that could be mentioned in Africa, Asia, Central America and Europe. Rwanda, whose tragedy borders on genocide, is one of the most telling cases. Greece, as a member of the European troika, took part in a mission of the European Union to Rwanda and its neighbouring countries, in order to assist in the task of finding solutions to this tragic political conflict and to the problem of the refugees.

As a representative of a Balkan country that has a primary interest in stability in the Balkans, and contributes decisively to its consolidation, I will now refer specifically to the conflict in the former Yugoslavia, which continues to be a source of serious concern to the international community, and to European countries in particular.

In spite of the major efforts of the international community, war is raging in the region for the fourth consecutive year. The victims on all sides are countless and the number of refugees is increasing dramatically. Greece actively participates in all international peace-making efforts. During the first part of this year when Greece held the presidency of the European Union, my country undertook a series of initiatives, aimed at arriving at a political solution of the conflict through negotiations.

The proposals of the contact group constitute a realistic basis for a settlement and must be accepted by the Bosnian Serb side as well. President Milosevic's decisive stance *vis-à-vis* the Bosnian Serbs strengthens this approach, and we hope that it will lead the Bosnian Serbs to accept the peace plan. In this context, we welcome Security Council resolutions 942 (1994) and 943 (1994).

The concentration of efforts aimed at ending the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina does not mean that less attention should be paid to a solution of the problem of the Krajinas, nor that its importance should be underestimated. Greece is willing to contribute actively to the *rapprochement* of the parties involved, so that a mutually acceptable settlement might be achieved.

We have, however, inherited yet another problem since the dissolution of the former Yugoslavia, that of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. It lies in the fact that the new State insists on calling itself "Macedonia". The Greek people and the Greek Government cannot accept this denomination because, together with provisions of the Constitution of Skopje, of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the propaganda against our country, as well as the appropriation of Greek national and historical emblems on their flag, it indicates irredentist claims against Greece. We hope that the good offices of Mr. Vance, on the basis of Security Council resolution 817 (1993), and the ensuing negotiating process within which Greece has demonstrated its good will and constructive approach, will soon bear fruit.

Another serious international and European problem, which is of considerable interest to the United Nations, the European Union and Greece in particular and which, unfortunately, remains unsolved, is that of Cyprus. More than 20 years after the Turkish invasion of Cyprus and 20 years after this body, in this very Hall, demanded the immediate withdrawal of all foreign occupation troops, a considerable part of Cyprus is still under occupation. Basic human rights are still being violated, and the tragedy of the refugees and of the missing and enclaved persons persists. Furthermore, in spite of the relevant United Nations resolutions, the mass establishment of Turkish settlers continues unabated, thus distorting the demographic composition of the island.

The Secretary-General, in his latest report to the Security Council, unequivocally acknowledged that it is the lack of political will of the Turkish Cypriot side that, over a number of years, has impeded any progress in the peace process. In spite of the many face-saving efforts being made, the Secretary-General's conclusion cannot be questioned. But even if some would wish to deliberately hide from the truth, the recent decision of the Turkish Cypriots, which rejects the very basis for a settlement - namely the Federation - that had been agreed and sought from the start, as well as the unequivocal and unconditional support that this decision received from Ankara, revealed the true Turkish sentiments and objectives: contempt for the United Nations resolutions and the preservation of illegally acquired territories following the invasion and the occupation.

There can be no doubt that this Turkish attitude of provocation is supported by the Turkish military presence on the island, which has gone unpunished for so many years. That is the reason why we believe that the efforts of the international community should focus, as a matter of priority, on the withdrawal of the Turkish occupying troops. In this context, President Clerides' fair and balanced proposal for the demilitarization of Cyprus should be duly taken into consideration.

The Secretary-General's recent efforts are in progress, and we are awaiting their results. However, mere verbal support by the international community for the Secretary-General's initiative will not suffice. The time has come to assist the Secretary-General with concrete actions aimed at Ankara, which is, of course, the key factor for developments in Cyprus. If, however, those efforts are not successful, as has happened in other cases, the international community will have to consider new, alternative methods and measures that will ensure the implementation of United Nations resolutions calling for the restoration of the sovereignty, territorial integrity and unity of the Republic of Cyprus, together with respect for the rights and freedoms of all its citizens.

The strengthening of good-neighbourly relations on the basis of respect for international law, national sovereignty, human rights and non-intervention in the internal affairs of other States is the cornerstone of Greek foreign policy. The implementation of those principles bears particular importance with regard to the relations between Greece and its neighbours. In this context, it is the sincere wish of the Greek Government that relations between Greece and Turkey be normalized.

It goes without saying that such a normalization of Greek-Turkish relations presupposes a just and lasting solution to the Cyprus problem and the restoration of the rule of international law with regard to Cyprus. Moreover, respect for international law and human rights, in conformity with the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations, the Helsinki Final Act and the Charter of Paris, is the only possible basis for the establishment and consolidation of a climate of mutual trust between Greece and Turkey.

Greece abides by the same principles in its foreign policy towards Albania. We aspire, through a dialogue which we have repeatedly sought, to the development of good-neighbourly relations and cooperation in all areas, within a framework of mutual respect for territorial integrity and national sovereignty and of the unconditional implementation of international instruments that safeguard respect for human rights.

Ample evidence of this policy is provided by the extensive and multifaceted economic and humanitarian assistance that my country has extended to Albania in recent years, in support of that country's reconstruction following a long period of totalitarian rule and in support of its economy by various means, including, *inter alia*, the massive flow of remittances from illegal Albanian immigrants, hundreds of thousands of whom live and work illegally in Greece.

On the other hand, the large Greek minority in Albania had been deprived by the previous regime of all its fundamental rights and had hoped that a change in Government would lead to a change in their conditions. Unfortunately, however, the new Albanian Government has pursued the same policies of its predecessors. Members of the minority are persecuted, and many internationally recognized fundamental human and minority rights are being violated in practice and not admitted to, in spite of the verbal assurances to the contrary of the Albanian Government. This is the case, for instance, in the field of education, with which the High Commissioner for National Minorities of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, Mr. Van Der Stoel, with whom the Greek Government is harmoniously cooperating, has been especially concerned.

The oppressive policy of the Albanian Government has culminated in the harsh sentences delivered against five leading members of the Greek minority, after a parody of investigation and judicial procedure, as witnessed by unprejudiced observers from international organizations. All the above justifies the impression that the Albanian leadership is promoting a climate of harassment against the Greek minority, so as to force its members to abandon their ancestral homes.

Greece reaffirms that, as it has assured the Secretary-General, it sincerely favours the development of good-neighbourly relations and constructive cooperation with Albania, and calls on the Albanian Government, in conformity with its international commitments, to respect the human rights and the individual freedoms of the Greek minority, so as to create the conditions necessary to ensure the development of such relations.

There are many other problems on which I would like to express the views of my country. However, time

is limited and I will constrain myself to addressing those we deem particularly important.

Significant and daring steps have been taken in the area of disarmament. In spite of the end of the confrontation between East and West, however, arms control and disarmament remain issues of primary importance due to the appearance of new sources of tension which jeopardize our efforts towards the non-proliferation of arms.

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) has played an important role to this day, and we believe that its unconditional and unlimited extension at the coming Conference of 1995 will further strengthen the overall legal status of non-proliferation.

We also hope that negotiations for a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty will soon yield positive results.

Moreover, Greece hopes to contribute to the entry into force of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons at the earliest possible date by promoting without delay the relevant ratification procedures.

Furthermore, my country is deeply concerned about the problem of the increasing presence of mines and other unexploded devices and has decided to declare a moratorium, without exception, on the export, sale or transfer of all anti-personnel land-mines. We call on all States to adopt similar measures.

It is time to accelerate and strengthen multilateral negotiations in the area of disarmament. The international community should prove that it is ready and willing to take the steps which will bring about practical solutions to the problem of disarmament and international security. We believe that an increase of the membership of the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva would greatly contribute to that end.

In addition, special attention should be given to the African continent, not only regarding the settlement of political disputes between various States but also with regard to the establishment of the necessary political, economic and social conditions for the restoration of peace and security and the improvement of the economic situation in all African countries.

The United Nations rightly places special emphasis on the economic and social fields, which are so essential to peaceful coexistence among peoples. We must all thoroughly consider the Agenda for Development and attempt to find a way for developing countries to benefit from the achievements of industrialized States. We must work together to find a new form of economic relations, taking into account the difficulties with which we are all confronted.

The International Conference on Population and Development which has just taken place in Cairo, the forthcoming World Summit for Social Development, in Copenhagen, in March 1995, and the Fourth World Conference on Women, in Beijing, in September 1995, as well as all the other meetings that took place last year on economic and social issues, are paving the way in the right direction.

Moreover, I feel it necessary to underline the importance that Greece attaches to the struggle against the international scourge of terrorism. My country unequivocally condemns all terrorist acts and actively contributes - working within the framework of close cooperation with third countries and competent international organizations - to all actions and efforts aimed at their elimination. However, I want to stress that economic and social development, safeguarding the rule of law and respect for human rights and individual freedoms are the most efficient and radical means to do away, once and for all, with this international scourge.

In concluding, I would like to express my country's interest in the future development of the institutional aspects of the Organization, in particular with regard to the Security Council, and to stress that Greece is willing to contribute actively to the consultations currently under way on these issues so as to achieve the best possible result for all Members of the United Nations.

In the same spirit, I would like to reaffirm Greece's full and unwavering commitment to the purposes and principles of the Organization within the context of international cooperation and solidarity. We undertake to contribute with all our means to the struggles and efforts to create lasting conditions that will ensure, at the dawn of the next millennium, that all peoples fully enjoy the benefits of freedom and development within a peaceful, democratic and creative environment.

The meeting rose at 1.30 p.m.